The Case of Joram.

A

SERMON

Preached before the

House of Peers

IN THE

Abby-Church at *WESTMINSTER*,

January 30. $167\frac{3}{4}$.

BY

SETH *Lord Bishop of* SARUM.

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Die Jovis 5°. Februarii 1673.

ORdered by the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament, that the Thanks of this House be, and is hereby, given to the Lord Bishop of Salisbury, for his pains in Preaching before the Lords in the Abby-Church at Westminster, on Friday the thirtieth day of January last; and that he be desired to Print and Publish his Sermon then Preached.

John Browne *Cler. Parliam.*

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The CASE of JORAM.

2 KINGS VI. and last Verse.

And he said, This evil is of the Lord, Wherefore should I wait upon the Lord any longer?

THE cause of this Solemn (and most Honourable) Assembly at this time, is to humble our selves in consideration of a most grievous and horrible Calamity, which was some years since (as upon this day) brought upon these Kingdoms, by the Sacrilegious and Bloody Martyrdom of our late most Excellent Sovereign; to afflict our souls in Contemplation of our sins; which brought upon us that heavy Judgment; with humble, penitent, broken and contrite Hearts to wait upon the Lord, to implore his Mercy in removing from us the guilt of that innocent blood, in pardoning our Offences, and taking away his Plagues and Judgments from us.

To work our selves to such a frame or temper of

Δεικτ. ſpirit, there are two ways or methods; either by ſhewing the Neceſſity and Utility, the Beauty and the Comelineſs of ſuch a temper, and the Happineſs which will follow thereupon (by convincing us how much it is our Duty, and our Intereſt, and Concernment) or elſe by having before our eyes (the indecency and abſurdity, the folly and madneſs, wickedneſs and miſery) how much it is againſt our Duty and againſt our Intereſt to be found in a contrary temper and diſpoſition.

ἀναιρετ. Ἀπαγωγὴ εἰς ἄτοπον.

Of theſe two Methods we find that *Solomon* (in his Book of the Preacher) made choice of the later; That to bring men to fear God, and keep his Commandments, he thought it beſt to convince the world of the vanity of all other courſes: That giving his mind to underſtand the reaſon of things, he applied himſelf to know the folly of wickedneſs, and the wickedneſs of folly and madneſs: And to bring men to wiſdom and virtue, he thought it the beſt expedient to repreſent to them the abſurdity and ugline ſs of folly and wickedneſs.

Something like to this I have propoſed to my ſelf at this time, and to that end I have choſen to ſubmit to your conſideration this ſtrange and extravagant inſtance in the Text.

Where (that I may the ſooner arrive at what I aim at) I ſhall not ſpend time in diſputing the Author of the words, but with the beſt Interpreters (as I conceive) ſuppoſe them to have been the words of *Joram* King of *Iſrael*; and (in ſome meaſure) to collect

collect and raiſe a true idea or character of him, I muſt draw you a little back into the Story.

Our Author I ſay was *Joram*; he was the Son of *Ahab* and *Jezabel*, and King of the ten Tribes of *Iſrael*: his capital City was *Samaria*: his adjacent neighbour on the North was *Benhadad* King of *Syria*, who now made War againſt him.

Joram not able to keep the Field, was driven up into *Samaria*, and there was obſtinately beſieged.

The City was a fenced (or fortified) City, and *Benhadad* would not ſtorm it, but reſolved to take it by Famine.

And the Famine here prevailed to a degree almoſt incredible: the prices of commodities ſo great, the diet, to which they were reduced, ſo vile (an Aſſes head was ſold for 80 pieces of ſilver, a cab of Pigeons dung for 5.)

So vile! nay, ſo exceedingly monſtrous and unnatural.

Can a woman (ſaith the Prophet *Iſaiah*) *forget her child*? Here two women conſpire together, and againſt the laws of God and nature, enter into an engagement (to act that which you will abhor to hear) to devour their tender little ones, and reſume into their bodies that fruit whereof they had lately been delivered.

And becauſe one of them repents of her engagement, the other makes her appeal to *Joram*: ſhe ſpies him walking the rounds to view the Works, and out of a complicated paſſion of hunger and ſorrow

sorrow, envy and indignation, in the agony and bitterness of her soul, she cries out, *Help O King!*

And now begin to take a character of this *Joram*. He supposed she had cried for Victuals, and he presently falls upon cursing the woman, Ὀργίζεις ἐπηράσατο αὐτῇ ὁ Θεόν. So *Josephus*. μὴ σε σῶσαι κύριος. So the *Septuagint*. *Let not God help thee, how should I help thee?*

Well! this was indeed part of the womans grief, but this was not all, she had killed her child; and her companion (according to agreement) had eaten part of him, and now had withdrawn her own: her spleen would now be satisfied as well as her stomach; she therefore states her case, and cries for Justice.

Indeed the case was lamentable, enough to move the heart of any man, and it put *Joram*'s into motion, but it was not into compassion, but fury.

It had been reason that he should have rent his Heart, and not his Garments; but he rends his cloaths, and falls into cursing and raving, and into a wild extravagant resolution, *God do so to me, and more also, if the head of* Elisha *the Son of* Shaphat *shall stand on him this day.*

What is the coherence? or where is the Logick of this cursing and damning resolution? How was *Elisha* concerned in what had happened?

Before, he cursed the woman, now he curses himself with a grievous curse; *God do so to me* [that is, take away my life:] *and more also* [that is, in the

the language of our times, God damn me] *if the head of Elisha* ——

But why must *Elisha* suffer? what had he done? had he devoured the child that was dead, or hid the living child; or brougt the Famine upon *Samaria?*

As if rage did submit to reason! or from the wrath of man, we were to expect the righteousness of God! that he should swear and curse there was no reason, nevertheless, for his Oaths sake, he sends his Messenger to *Elisha's* house, and presently follows to see the Execution.

Where (to make up the *hiatus*, betwixt his coming and uttering the words of the text) we may conceive that *Joram* has there blustered out the Story of the woman; That he hath raved at *Elisha*, and blasphemed against the Lord himself; and that in reply, the Prophet had endeavoured to allay the passion, and calm the storm of rage, that was upon him: That he had put him in mind of looking up to God the sender of all Publique Calamities; exhorted him to humble himself under his mighty hand, to wait upon him for deliverance, to pray to him for succour, and the like.

To all which he ungratiously rejoyns, according to the tenor of the text.

You tell me of the Lord, Who is the Lord that I should concern my self about him? You talk of God, and think to draw me into a vain and pucillanimous devotion, and so to drill me into a frivolous hope and expectation.

You talk of Waiting, have I not waited all this while?

You speak of Praying, τί ἀναβῶ? to what end should I pray?

I have spoken, and he will not hear; I have called, and he will not answer; I have clothed my self with Sackcloth (Lo! here it is upon my loins!) and he laughs at it.

The more I court him, the more he slights me.

The evils that are upon us are of his own sending, 'Tis evidently his hand that is upon us, and he that hath cast us into all our misery, Wherefore I'le Seek to him no more, I'le Pray no more, I'le Wait no longer.

This evil is from the Lord, Wherefore should I wait upon the Lord any longer?

You see now the absurdity involved in this instance, which that it may make a better impression upon us, we will consider it more particularly.

In the words are

I. A Supposition or Concession (and that Sober and Rational) *This evil is of the Lord.*

II. An Inference or Conclusion (and that Absurd and Irrational) intimated in the form of a deliberative Question or Interrogation, *Wherefore should I wait*, &c.

The Supposition or Concession may be considered either

1. Abso-

1. Absolutely and simply, and then it will afford us this Observation, *viz.*

Publique Judgments or Calamities proceed from the hand of God.

2. Relatively as proceeding from *Joram*, and then it offers us this Observation, *viz.*

The most wicked and distempered persons are sometimes forced to discern and acknowledg the hand of God in the dispensations of his Judgments.

My business will be, First to evince the Truth of the Observations; Then to shew the Absurdity of *Joram*'s inference; And so to descend to Application.

1. The first Observation is this, *That Publique Judgments and Calamities proceed from the hand of God.*

That is to say, They do not arise out of the Dust (as *Job* speaks); They are not scattered into the world by the uncertain distribution of blind and improvident Contingency, nor thrust upon it by an ungoverned overbearing force of a Brute Fatality. They proceed not from a casual coincidence of various senseless Atoms. Chap. 5. 6.

Nor from the overpowring influence or combination of the Planets or the Stars. Nor from the malignant ardours of ill-boding and portending Comets (all which are the foolish imaginations of Atheistical or Superstitious persons) But they are sent out of the Armory and Magazine of him, Who hath made all things by his Word, susteins them by his Power, and rules them by his Providence.

I may not upon this occasion be permitted to enter upon a Philosophical or Theological discourse, concerning the Providential Administration of the world, or the Properties or Attributes of God, from whence it ariseth, upon which it is founded; or the manner of his concurrency with secondary Causes (how that insinuates its influence, and performs its operation, so as the Contingency of Events, and Liberty of Agents, may be maintained).

I shall here content my self only to suggest thus much to your Notice and Observation; That As the Providential Administration of the world proceeds immediately from the Efficacy of the Divine Wisdom, Power, and Presence, So there is not any thing in nature wherein every one of these may not by a considering Person be discerned.

(*Præsentemque refert quælibet herba Deum*).

And as the smallest Rivolet, attentively and constantly followed, will direct and lead one to the Sea; so the most fortuitous event, being traced through the chain and series of it's Causes, will bring the mind at last to the original Fountain and Ocean of all causality, and force an acknowledgment of a wise, voluntary, providential administration of the world.

And as for this part of Providence in the dispensation of Publick Plagues and National Calamities, it is so obvious to common reason, that it hath forced an acknowledgment not only from men of Philosophical and deep consideration (whether of the

the *Græcanic* or *Barbaric* Families) But from Historians, Rhetoricians, and Poets, persons not obliged by their profession to so severe an enquiry, or so deep a penetration into the works of nature.

Homer refers the Calamities of the *Trojan* War to the will of *Jupiter*, Διὸς δ' ἐτελέετο βουλή. *Virgil* to state the original of the Contest between the *Romans* and the *Carthaginians*, and of the bloudy Wars and Miseries consequent thereupon, enquires, *Quo Numine læso?* With *Euripides* the usual Epithet of ξυμφορὰ is πήματος, sent from God.

And to convince the *Epicuræans* and the *Stoics* (*i. e.* the Asserters of fortuitous or fatal Administration) St. *Paul* himself appeals to the testimony (of one of their own Heathen Poets, namely to a saying) of *Aratus*, τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμεν, Acts 17.28.

But why should I detein you in the out-skirts of humane reason or testimony! seeing we have a surer word of Prophesie, which plainly assures us (both in general and in particular; by way of Assertion and Prediction; in reference to Nations, Plagues and Persons) that Vengeance is the Lord's; and the Distribution of Plagues and Judgments is within his own peculiar Jurisdiction.

That it was he that let loose the Cataracts of Heaven upon the old World, and sent down the fire and brimston upon the Cities of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*. That the plagues of Wars, of Pestilence, Famine, Wild beasts, &c. are all of them his Messengers; and he sends them where he sees cause.

That

That there can be no evil in a City or a Kingdom which the Lord hath not done. That he it was that prepared and ordered, and marshalled out the Plagues of *Egypt*, and the Burdens of *Moab* and *Ammon* and *Dumah*, and all the other Nations mentioned in the Prophets. That he gave *Jacob* to the spoil, and *Israel* to the robber.

Is there evil in the city and the Lord will not require it?

And (to come yet nearer to the Case of *Joram* in the Text) to shew that he was the dispenser of these things, he punctually foretold the fate of his Father *Ahab*, and concerning *Jezebel* his Mother, "That Dogs should eat her by the Wall of *Jezreel*; And he may seem long before to have pointed at this very particular instance of the Judgment in the Text.

Deut. 28. 52, 53. *If thou forsake the Lord thy God — thine Enemy shall besiege thee in all thy Gates — and thou shalt eat the fruit of thy body, the Flesh of thy Sons and of thy Daughters, in the Siege; because of the straitness wherewith thine Enemies shall distress thee:* So that I shall say no more in proof of the first Observation, arising from the Concession of *Joram* absolutely considered; *He said, This evil is from the Lord.*

2. I come now to the second Observation, drawn from the consideration of this Concession in reference to *Joram*, from whom it did proceed, *viz.* "*The most wicked and most distemper'd sinners are* "*forced sometimes to acknowledg the hand of God in the* "*dispensations of his Judgments.*

To the design and purpose of our present meeting, nothing

nothing in the world can be of greater consequence than to be thorowly convinced of the truth of the former Observation. And to this end nothing can be superadded of greater moment, than the manifesting the truth of this which we are now upon.

Surely great is the power and irresistable the force of such a truth, as can assert it self in the most indisposed minds of men, and break through the strongest defences and Barricado's raised against it: That can gain an admittance and extort a Recognition from those whose understandings are most indisposed to receive it, and whose inclinations and affections most averse, and whose endeavours are most engaged against it.

And this is the pretence of the present Observation, in reference to wicked and ungodly persons:

Though they are unacquainted with any religious consideration, and the wayes of God and of his Providence very rarely come in all their thoughts:

Though they give themselves up to vain Imaginations, so that their fooliſh heart is darkned: Though they endeavour to put out the light within them, and love the darkness rather than the light:

Though they say unto God depart from us, for we desire not the knowledg of thy ways:

Though they do their utmost endeavour to arm and fortifie themselves against all impression, to sear and cauterize their consciences, to hearden their hearts as an Anvile, and their faces as the nether Milstone:

In

In plainer terms, though they devote themselves to prophaneness and debauchery, enter themselves in the Academy of Atheism and Irreligion, become very hard Students in the Schools of Rioting and Drunkenness, of Chambering and Wantonness, of Hectoring and Ranting: Frequent the Brothels and the Stage.

Yet all this will not serve their turns; when the hand of God is lifted up, though they will not see, yet they shall see and be afraid:

And to this recognition they shall be constreined, by one or both of these two ways especially; either

1. By some special signiture upon the Object.

2. By some special and extraordinary excitation of the Subject.

1. In the dispensation of God's extraordinary works of Providence, (whether in the way of Mercy or of Judgment) he takes an especial care, that neither his hand may be undiscerned, nor the Acts of his Providence unregarded. And to this end he orders them, and sends them forth dressed and trimm'd with circumstances, eminently conspicuous and characteristical.

Job. 37. 7. *Elihu* tells us (in the Book of *Job*) "That God "sets his hand, and stamps his Seal upon his Works, "that all men may see, and every man may know "that they are his Works.

Isa. 41. 20. The Prophet *Esay* tells us, "That God doth his "Works in such a manner, that they may see, and "know, and consider, and understand, that the hand

hand of the Lord hath done them.

Concerning the Works of Mercy *David* prays, That God would shew some token upon him for good, that men might see it, and that they may know, that this is his hand, and that the Lord hath done it.

And concerning God's Judgments, he declares, that he (plainly and sensibly) discovered in them the hand of the Almighty. *Thine arrows* (saith he) *stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore, there is no health in my flesh, because of thy displeasure, nor any rest in my bones, by reason of my sin.*

2. But secondly, this often happens by some great and extraordinary awakening and excitation of the subject; of which kind, though the particular instances are various (as the motion of the wind that bloweth where it listeth) yet they may be generally reduced either to

I. The natural Eruptions,

Or

II. The providential stimulation and excitations of the Conscience.

1. Though the Principles of Syntereſis, the seeds of Piety and Virtue scattered and disseminated in the Soul (to bring forth the fruit of Vertue and Felicity) may be trampled on and kept under, crop'd and snib'd by the bestial part, yet they will sometimes be starting out, sprouting and putting forth themselves.

Though the *Scintillæ virtutum*, the (sparks intend-

ed to enlighten and enflame the Soul to goodneſs) may be ſmothered, and oppreſſed, and raked up in aſhes, yet ſometimes they will make an Eruption, and put all things into a conflagration and combuſtion:

Theſe Principles are congenit and connatural to the Soul: They are not to be eraſed or extinguiſhed, but their duration muſt and will be coextended with the ſubject of them.

Rom. chap 1 & 2. St. *Paul* aſſures us, that even the Heathens themſelves, and even of them the worſt and moſt depraved and debauched (ſuch as are filled with all unrighteouſneſs, and given up to vile affections, and all manner of uncleanneſs, have ſtill the work of the Law (of Nature) written in their hearts; that they know the righteous judgment of God, and that they which do ſuch things are worthy of death, That the wrath of God is revealed in them; And they have Conſciences accuſing or excuſing, naturally and certainly tormenting them by particular Applications upon occaſion.

2. But ſecondly, Wicked men are convinced of the hand of God, in the diſpenſation of his Judgments, by the means of Providential Excitations.

Now theſe are numberleſs in particulars, and of many kinds. I ſhall only inſtance in a very few.

1. Sometimes they are put into an expectation of Judgments, and thereby prepared and diſpoſed to diſcover and to apprehend the ſignature and impreſſion

sion of an Avenging Nemesis, by the eminent Atrocity of their actions.

This was the case of *Cain* and *Lamech*, who having committed Murther were perpetually tormented with ominous bodings and fearful expectations. Every man that sees me will slay me, cries one: If *Cain* shall be avenged seven fold, surely *Lamech* seventy times seven, cries the other.

This was the Case of *Alexander* and of *Nero*, when they were haunted and tormented by the Ghosts of *Parmeno* and *Agrippina* (and is generally the Case of secret Murderers.)

2. The secure and dormant Conscience is awakened by Acts of Providence, not in their nature extraordinary, but in the circumstances very suitable and proportioned to some former sin.

When the Sons of *Jacob* were brought into trouble and great perplexity (into anxiety and anguish of Soul) they presently made this Application, *We are verily guilty concerning our Brother, for we saw the anguish of his Soul when he besought us, and we would not hear,* Gen. 42. 21.

3. Sometimes by some extraordinary Signs and Indications. When *Belshazzar* saw the fingers writing upon the Wall, the joynts of his loyns were loosed, and his knees smote one against another.

4. Oft-times a powerful and seasonable Charge or Admonition from a poor despised Minister, qualified and sent upon that Errand, hath shaken the stoutest heart, and brought down the confidence of

the proudeſt ſinner, and forced him to tremble at the apprehenſion of a preſent or impendent Judgment.

Of all the Sinners mentioned in the Old Teſtament, the Sacred Hiſtory gives preeminence to *Ahab*: It always mentions him with a note of Eminence and Ἐξοχή. This is that King *Ahab*! He ſold himſelf to work wickedneſs, he exalted himſelf againſt God and man, and went on triumphantly in a courſe of ſinning: He killed, alſo took poſſeſſion: yet when
1 Kings 1. 8. *Elijah* (a poor overgrown neglected hairy man, girt with a girdle of leather about his loins) charges him that it was he that troubled *Iſrael*, and denounces the Judgments which ſhould befall him; *He rent his cloaths, and put ſackcloth upon his fleſh, he faſted and lay in ſackcloth, and went ſoftly.*

Of all the wicked perſons mentioned in the New Teſtament, there is none who (by the Hiſtory of *Joſephus*, and by *Tacitus* and other Roman Authors) is repreſented to have been more impudent and ſcandalous, more outragiouſly debaucht then *Felix* the Roman Governour of *Judea* under *Claudius* and *Nero*: yet when *Paul* (his Priſoner a little weariſh aged man, whoſe bodily preſence was weak, and his ſpeech contemptible) reaſoned, before him concerning righteouſneſs and temperance, and the Judgment to come, *Felix trembled.*

Whether the conviction of *Joram* did proceed from one or more, or all, or any of theſe cauſes, it is not needful to enquire: Thus much appears in fact, that though

though he was extracted from *that* King *Ahab*, and from *that* Queen *Jezabel*; though his life and manners were answerable to his extraction and education; though he was under a complicated distemper of mind, a paroxysm of madness, yet in the midst of all his indispositedness he is forced to acknowledge the hand of God in that Calamity, which was upon him. He! even *Joram!* said, *This evil is from the Lord. Even wicked and distempered men are forced sometimes to acknowledge the hand of God in the dispensations of his judgments.*

Hitherto I have endeavoured to represent and prove before you the truth and evidence of this concession or supposition (the τὸ διάφορον) laid down by *Joram*, and how agreeable that is to Reason, Scripture, and Experience.

And now what consequence would any one expect from such an antecedent? If the words had been barely (without proof or enlargement) delivered by the Prophet, had it not been reasonable for him to assent to the truth of them, and natural for him to have fallen upon this conclusion: *This evil is from the Lord; therefore upon him will I wait; to him will I address my self for our deliverance*; and forthwith to have put himself upon all necessary and congruous ways of application? But being delivered by himself, as an extorted acknowledgment of his awaken'd conscience: Who would not expect, that although before his conviction he went on resolutely in his course?

Yet

Yet being now rowſed and awakened, he ſhould proceed according to his Conviction, That the ſame cauſes which had forced him to ſee and acknowledge the hand of God in the Judgment, ſhould have prevailed with him to apply himſelf to him for the removal of it.

Who would not expect that the words ſhould run thus? *This evil is from the Lord*, wherefore upon him will I wait for ſuccour, and not give over until he have mercy on us.

But behold! *he ſaid*, *This evil is from the Lord*; *wherefore ſhould I wait on the Lord any longer?*

II. And now the abſurdity of this Inference is that which remains to be laid open before you.

I call it an Inference becauſe in effect this deliberative queſtion carries the force of a ſtrong negation, *Wherefore ſhould I wait?* i. e. I am reſolved I will wait no longer.

To take the full meaning of that word; which is here rendred by waiting, I muſt entreat you to obſerve, that the queſtion is in

the { *Hebrew* מַה אוֹחִיל לַיהוָה *Quid expectabo?*
Chaldee מָה אֲצַלֵּי קוּדָּם יְהוָה: *Cur patienter me geram?*
Septuagint Τί ἐνδῶ, *Quid deprecabor?* [Δέησις in the Scripture ſignifies Prayer and Supplication (and that with earneſtneſs, ſtrong crying and tears) and is uſually joyned with faſting and other acts of mortification and humiliation. So that the word יָחַל is of a large extenſive ſignification, and comprehends all theſe notions in it. It

It ſeems the Prophet, finding him in a diſtemper, had exhorted him to give over huffing and ranting, curſing and ſwearing; and to betake himſelf to faſting and mourning, to prayers and earneſt Supplication: to give over his ſturdy and inſolent behaviour, and to compoſe himſelf to meekneſs and a deep humiliation.

To leave off his frowardneſs and impatience, and with patience and due ſubmiſſion, to tarry the Lord's leiſure, to expect and wait upon him for deliverance.

To all which he replies in theſe words, *Mah Ochil ladonai*: Wherefore ſhould I faſt and pray, or betake my ſelf to weeping and mourning? Why ſhould I ſubmit and humble my ſelf under the hand of God? to what purpoſe ſhould I expect, and wait upon him any longer for deliverance: (intimating a peremptory reſolution to the contrary.)

You ſee now the Queſtion betwixt *Joram* and the Prophet, and I am to make your ſelves the Judges, which of them had reaſon on his ſide: In order whereunto it is neceſſary that I premiſe three things.

1. In every deliberation the end or ſcope is preſuppoſed, and the queſtion is, of the beſt and likelieſt means for the attainment of that end.

2. When any one is fallen into calamity, it is to be preſumed, that the end which he will propoſe to himſelf, will be the removal of the calamity.

3. *Joram* having acknowledged his calamity to have come from God, it was ſuppoſed, on both ſides, that

that to remove, or continue this calamity, was entirely and absolutely in the hand and power of God. So that the only question is this, which is the likeliest way to prevail with God, to remove his Judgments, and take away his heavy hand, the way of *Elisha*, or the way of *Joram*.

Now, although it seems very easie, to determine this question, upon principles of common reason, and by reflexion upon the ways of men; yet seeing it is to be supposed, that every one knows best, what way it is, that will move and prevail upon himself;

And seeing God hath declared himself in this matter, and his declarations were then extant in the writings of *Moses* and the Prophets (to which, a King of *Israel* ought to be no stranger) I should think it most congruous, that the deliberation ought to proceed upon those measures, and the enquiry accordingly to be, what was like to be the issue of *Elisha's* way, and what on the other side, if *Joram's* way should be taken, in this case of publick Calamity.

1. Then how hath God declared himself as to Prayer and Fasting on one hand, and to Cursing and Swearing on the other? (and so of the rest of the particulars in Question.)

1. In general, *Call upon me*, saith the Lord, *in the time of trouble, and I will hear thee and help. I cried unto the Lord in my trouble* (saith *David*) *and he delivered me out of my distress.*

vide Psal. 107.

Again! as to Fasting and Mourning, in a day of dark-

darkneſs (*i. e.* a caſe of Publick Calamity) the way prescribed by the Prophets is, to blow the trumpet in Sion, to proclaim a Faſt, and call a ſolemn Aſſembly. For the Prieſts to weep betwixt the Porch and the Altar. That men turn unto the Lord with all their hearts, and with Faſting, and with Weeping, and with Mourning. Joel 2. 15. Joel 2. 12.

But as for *Joram*'s way, (the ranting, curſing, ſwearing, blaſpheming way) God hath declared, That becauſe of Swearing and of Curſing the Land mourns: He loved not bleſſing, and it ſhall be far from him; he delighted in curſing, and it ſhall happen unto him: it ſhall come into his bowels like water, and like oyl into his bones. And for the blaſphemy, wherewith mine Enemies have blaſphemed me, I will up, ſaith God, and I will eaſe me of mine Enemies, and avenge me of mine Adverſaries. Pſal. 109. 6.

2. As to *Eliſha*'s way of meekneſs and humiliation, God hath declared, That he will have reſpect unto the lowly, and give grace and favour to the humble: "And though he dwells in the high "and holy place, he will dwell alſo with him that "is of an humble and contrite heart. More particularly as to the caſe in hand, he hath expreſly promiſed; "If I bring upon the land Famine, "or Peſtilence, or Sword, or any other plague; "and my people humble themſelves: then will I "hear from heaven, and will remove their "plague. 2 Chron. 7. 13.

But in reference to *Joram*'s way, he had declared that he hateth the proud looks, and will deſtroy the ſturdy ſinner: That he will pull down the ſtoutneſs of their hearts; and the haughtineſs of the haughty ſhall be humbled.

3. Laſtly! he hath declared, on one hand, that the patient abiding of the meek ſhall not periſh for ever; but on the other, that the frowardneſs of
Prov. 3. 32. the froward is an abomination to him.

And now the caſe being clearly ſtated, one would think certainly, that *Joram* (without any hæſitation) ſhould ſubmit to the propoſals of the Prophet, and come to a quick and a ſpeedy reſolution to purſue them.

But now behold and wonder! ſtand amazed all ye that pretend to ſenſe and reaſon.

He cannot deny any one of *Eliſha*'s premiſſes, yet he adheres, and ſticks to his own concluſion, and roundly reſolves, that he will neither faſt nor pray (much leſs betake himſelf to whining) he will not humble nor ſubmit himſelf; he will not attend or wait upon the Lord any longer.

Very well and wiſely! But what then becomes of the τὸ συμφέρον? And how ſhall this ſame calamity be removed?

To remove the calamity there are but two ways imaginable:

1. The way of Addreſs or Accommodation: or, 2. The way of force and compulſion: and the former of theſe he hath declined, and will he there-

therefore betake himself to the later?

What King being to make War, sits not down first, and considers, whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand.

The Lord is a Lord of Hosts, and a Man of War: *thousand thousands minister unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before him.* Dan. 7. 10. We see him coop'd up by the King of *Syria*, and will he now make War with the King of Heaven? Let the potsheard strive with the potsheards of the earth: But who art thou, O *Joram*! that strivest against God? what is the hope wherein thou trustest? or wherein lies thy confidence, that thou rebellest? Did ever any man exalt himself against God, and hath prevailed?

Call to remembrance things lately past, and of ancient days how he hath formed it: The success of the Giants of old; the modern Fate of *Ahab* thy Father, the Destiny of *Jezabel* thy Mother, for the wickedness of thy Father *Ahab*, the Whoredoms, and Witchcrafts of *Jezabel* thy Mother.

What doth this man intend to do? and what doth this resolution signifie? Will he arise in the power of his might, and make a gallant sally, and so scatter and confound his adversaries? Will he cause the earth to open, and swallow up this *Benhadad*, and cover the Congregation of the *Syrians*?

Or will he cause Quails or Manna to fall from heaven, and remove the Famine, wherewith himself and people are distressed?

Judge in your selves Brethren! were not this a foolish imagination, an instance of stupidity and madness?

Well then! Because the Lord hath vexed him by his plagues, will he endeavour to plague the Lord by his wickedness?

Alas! his wickedness extendeth not to him. Is not this the folly and madness of wickedness?

But he will revenge himself upon the Church: and wreak his spleen upon the Prophet, "God do "so to him, and more also, if the head of *Elisha* "the Son of *Shaphat* shall stand upon him.

Is not this the wickedness of folly and madness?

Briefly! is not this case of *Joram* a monstrous and a prodigious case? Doth he not deserve to be punished and tormented with many stripes? To be tormented (as it were) in *Bedlam*, for the madness of his wickedness? In the Valley of *Hinnom* for the wickedness of his madness? There it was that *Tophet* was prepared of old, for the King it was prepared: and certainly this seems to be the very King, for whom it was prepared.

Application. IS this now your Judgment and Determination? Is this the sentence of this great and noble, this wise and honorable Assembly? Come then (in the

the name of God, I humbly pray you) and let us reaſon a while together:

Hath this only been the caſe of that perſon, of whom we have been ſpeaking, and is it not alſo the caſe of us, that have all this while been ſpeaking and hearing, cenſuring and judging of him? Plainly! Was it only the caſe of that King of *Iſrael?* and is it not the caſe of this Kingdom of *England?* "And we, that have judged another, have we not "condemned our ſelves? Is not this (I ſay) *Englands* caſe?

1. In reſpect of Publique Calamities, which have been brought upon us?

2. Of our Behaviour in reference to thoſe Calamities?

1. How great and manifold have been the Calamities of this poor ſinful Kingdom?

2. And how plain and conſpicuous have been the ſignatures, and impreſſions of the hand of God upon thoſe Calamities?

To look no further back, than we are obliged by the occaſion of this our meeting together: What ſort of Plague or Judgment hath not, within the ſpace of 20 or 30 years, been inflicted upon this Kingdom? What ſort (I ſay) of Spiritual Judgment, or Temporal Calamity?

The *Judgment*, which we are here met to commemorate, and lament; had in it a compliication of all manner of Spiritual Judgments (of Injuſtice and impiety, of carnal and ſpiritual

tual Wickedneſs) as well as Miſery and Calamity.

It was a Calamity pregnant and productive of innumerable others, wherewith it hath been ſucceeded, and which are perpetually pullulating from it. For this the Land hath mourned wellnigh 30 years; and for all that, God's anger is not turned away, but his hand is ſtretched out ſtill.

His Judgments have followed us, and grown more and more upon us to this very moment, ſtill eating into our bowels, and corroding into our bones. And if we be not more mad than *Joram*, we cannot but acknowledge them to have proceeded from the hand of God.

This would evidently appear, if I might be permitted to inſiſt and animadvert upon the evils which have befallen us; and trace them backward to that great and prodigious Judgment, which was the cauſe of this days obſervation.

I ſhall not need to ſpend time to prove, that our threatning and growing Famine, our preſent Murrein, or late Peſtilence have proceeded from the hand of God: Such plagues as theſe are ſo plainly and confeſſedly *Divine*, that *David* being left to his choice betwixt the Sword, the Famine, and the Peſtilence, thought it a plain expreſſion of his mind, when he only deſired he might fall into the hand of God.

I ſhall therefore proceed to a few particulars of an-

another nature. That a novel and upſtart Commonwealth of a Nation, lately feeble and poor, whining and ſubmiſſive, ſhould in the ſpace of not many years arrive at the ungrateful boldneſs to provoke a powerful and mighty Kingdom, (a Kingdom to which they had been in their weakneſs and minority ſo much obliged;) That they ſhould be permitted to diſappoint and baffle their ſtrongeſt Preparations, and come to ſuch an height as to attempt, and endeavour to fix upon them marks and characters of perpetual ignominy and diſhonour.

That a fire ſhould proceed out of the Bramble, which ſhould conſume the Cedars of *Lebanon:* That a ſpark ſhould kindle in a corner, and ſhould be permitted to deſtroy all the ſtately Palaces, publick Buildings, and venerable Churches in one of the moſt conſiderable Cities of the World, beſides 12000 private habitations. This certainly is *Digitus Dei*: *This evil is from the Lord.*

When after the miſeries of 20 years the Lord had cauſed Light to ſpring out of Darkneſs, and Order out of Confuſion; Reduced all things to that ſtate and poſition, out of which they had been diſtorted; Had Reſtored our Religion, our Laws, and Liberties; Had Eſtabliſhed the King, the Church, the Nobility, Gentry, Populacy in their ancient Rights and legal Stations; Had fortified all theſe by new additional Laws, and a Loyal and worthy Parliament.

That

That after all this, without any disturbance by Foreign Invasion, or intestine Rebellion, meerly by the application of our own wisdom and policy (and our most industrious endeavours) in the short space of about a dozen years (the same Parliament still continuing) This goodly Fabrick should be shattered, and all things e'ne ready to drop into Disorder and Confusion.

That out of Depth of Policy, and Mystery of State, the foundations of Government should be subverted, and the Ligaments of it dissolved.

That for the establishment of Government, every one should be permitted to do that, which is right in his own eyes; as if there were no King in *Israel*.

That for the Advancement of the Established Religion, there should be permitted to assume to themselves a Toleration of all Religions (or rather irreligions) Schisms, Heresies, and Blasphemies in the world.

That out of Indulgence to tender Consciences, the Principles of Atheism and Anarchy should be permitted to be disseminated, countenanced, watered, cherished and fostered, and all means used, that conscience it self should be eradicated out of the Souls of men.

WIth fear and trembling! horror and amazement! to come up to the prodigious instance of this day!

That

That the vileſt and the worſt of men ſhould be permitted in the moſt horrible and moſt impious (the moſt impudent and brazen-faced) manner, under a form of Godlineſs and Juſtice, in the ſight of this Sun; in contempt and defiance of Providence, and of God himſelf, to ſhed the Royal Blood, and take away the Sacred Life of the Lord's *Anointed*; and of him that was the moſt Harmleſs and Innocent, the moſt Meek and Gentle, the moſt Virtuous and Religious, the moſt Sober and Prudent Prince that ever ſate upon the Engliſh Throne.

Laſtly, That after all this, and all the reſt that our eyes have ſeen. After the Maſſacre and Rebellion in *Ireland*, The Covenant contrived in *Scotland*, The Bloody Wars and Sacrilegious Judgment and Execution made here in *England*.

That after we have ſeen the end of the Lord, the Vengeance of God ſo ſignally executed upon the Principal Authors, Actors, and Promoters, the Judges and Executioners of all thoſe things; Matters ſhould (in ſo ſhort a time) be brought to that paſs, that (according to the various Inclinations of men) ſome ſhould Fear, and others Hope, that the Monarchy of *England*, and that Religion, and thoſe Laws, and the very perſons, which uphold it, ſhould now be abandoned; And that the great Intereſts of Religion and Government ſhould be delivered up

into the hands of the *Iriſh* or *Engliſh* Papiſts, the *Scottiſh* or *Engliſh* Covenanters, or other Sectaries and Fanaticks.

Are not all theſe things ſtrange and wonderful? are they not marvellous in our eyes? In all this is not the hand of God clearly to be ſeen? certainly we cannot but acknowledge, that *This evil is from the Lord.* So that in reſpect of Judgments and Calamities you have ſeen the correſpondence of our Caſe with the Caſe of *Joram.*

2. Let us now reflect upon the National behaviour, and examine, Whether hath this been ordered according to the way of *Eliſha*, or the way of *Joram.*

When the Judgments of God have been ſo many, ſo grievous, ſo viſible amongſt us, have the Inhabitants of the Land learned righteouſneſs, or unrighteouſneſs? Have they prevailed upon us, to break off our ſins by Repentance, or to continue in them, and increaſe them with a briſker and ſturdier reſolution?

As the Lord's hand hath been more and more lifted up, have not we endeavoured with an higher and higher hand, to ſin againſt him?

As he hath ſmitten us more and more, have not we revolted more and more?

Inſtead of being made a Religious and a Praying People, are we not become an Atheiſtical, and a Scoffing, and Blaſphe[illegible]ing People?

Inſtead

Inſtead of being a Sober and Faſting People, are we not become a Riotous and Drunken People?

Inſtead of being made a Chaſt and Modeſt, a Meek and Humble, a Gentle and Compoſed People; are we not become a Shameleſs and Immodeſt, a Ranting and Tearing, a Hectoring and God-damning People?

Briefly! "Inſtead of turning to the Lord with "all our hearts; and with Faſting, and with Weep- "ing and with Mourning for our Sins: Have we not turned from him with all our hearts, and with laughing, and with ſcoffing, and with jeering at all Humiliation, and Devotion, and Religion?

It is not here my intention to charge every individual Perſon with theſe things: No doubt there are thouſands in this our *Iſrael*, who have not bowed themſelves to theſe enormities. And it is well for them, and happy for the Kingdom, that there are ſo: for, "Except the Lord had left us ſuch a "remnant, we ſhould have been as *Sodom*, and made "like unto *Gomorrha*.

Yet (the exception of this remnant notwithſtanding) may it not be fit to conſider, whether we be not truly and properly a ſinful Nation, a People laden with Iniquity?

The Prophet *Iſaiah* tells us, that the Lord had Chap. 1.
left them ſuch a remnant, and all that notwithſtanding, they remained ſtill a ſinful Nation, a People laden with Iniquity, that their whole head was ſick, and their heart faint; that from the ſole

of the foot to the crown of the head there was nothing but Wounds and Ulcers, ſtinking Leproſies, and putrefied Sores.

Will it not be fit therefore for us, to examine our condition, to conſider what we may expect, and what is fit for us to do?

To ſearch the Wounds and Ulcers of this Kingdom from the ſole of the foot to the crown of the head. To examine or expoſe the Condition of all Degrees, Orders, and States of men in this Kingdom (The Clergy, and the Laity, the Gentry and the Commonalty, the City and the Court; in their Perſonal, or Publique, or Politick Capacities) though I ſuppoſe that to ſome it might be acceptable, yet it lies not in my Commiſſion, and I ſhall wave it.

My Commiſſion reaches to thoſe who have called me hither, at leaſt in that Capacity wherein they have called me: And I hope they will not be offended at me in the conſcientious diſcharge of that Commiſſion. I therefore take the humble boldneſs in the Name of God, and our King, and Country to enquire of my ſelf, and thoſe, that brought me hither, Whether we alſo have not fallen into the way of *Joram*? Whether we can waſh our hands of the univerſal Irreligion and Debauchery which ſeems to have over-ſpread the Land?

Qui non vetat peccare, cum poſſit,
Jubet.

Have we employed the great and various talents where-

wherewith we have been intrusted, Publick and Private, Personal and Politick; the Advantages of Nobility and Education, the Interest of our Persons and our Places, our Authority Judicial and Legislative to prevent or to punish these horrible enormities.

Nay, have we readily accepted and embraced such means as have been tendered to that purpose?

If we should be examined what good Laws in twelve years space have proceeded from us, to bring our selves and others to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. What charitable Laws, to prevent the Poverty and Beggery, the Villany and Roguery, the miserable ends, and fatal destiny of such multitudes of people, as daily perish by a fearful end, should we not be puzzled to reply?

If Laws against Rioting and Drunkenness shall have been, or shall be hereafter stifled, lest they should prevent Consumption, and make an abatement of our Rents, or the Excise.

Against Atheism and Blasphemy, lest they should dull the Wits and hinder the exercise of Reasoning, abate the disputacity of the Nation.

Against Swearing and Cursing, Ranting and Tearing, Hectoring and Rencountring, lest they should abate the vivacity, and take off the edge, or spoil the mettle of the young Blades of the Kingdom.

Against Prophanation of the Lord's Day (I do not

not mean tending to Judaism or Sabbatarianism) lest they should intrench upon the Mirth and Jollity, the Sports and Recreations of the People.

When God shall call us to answer upon such interrogatories, how are we provided to reply?

Upon this occasion, in this mixt Auditory, to enlarge any further upon this argument, I do not find my self obliged by my Commission. But there is one thing, which by virtue of another Commission, I find my self obliged plainly and clearly to lay before your Lordships, and it is this (with which I shall conclude.)

That (as sure as there is a God in Heaven, a Lord that is higher then your Lordships, as sure as Christ is now sitting at his right hand, as sure as holy men of old (the Prophets and Apostles) were Inspired by the Holy Ghost) If we do not speedily break out of this way of *Joram*, if we do not our utmost to redeem and rescue the Kingdom from it; this our Iniquity will be our Ruine.

That (if after so many loud calls to Religion and Virtue, we shall resolvedly go on in the ways of Irreligion and Debauchery, or (which in our case is all one) if we shall not do our utmost for the eradication of them, we must expect a sure and a swift destruction.

Isa. 22. 13. "In that day (saith the Prophet *Isaiah*) did "the Lord God of Hosts call to weeping, and to "mourning, to sackcloth and to baldness,—— "And behold, jollity and gladness, slaying of Oxen,

"Oxen, and killing of Sheep, eating fleſh and "drinking wine, (*Let us eat and drink, for to "morrow we ſhall die*) And it was revealed in "mine ears by the Lord of Hoſts: Surely this ini- "quity ſhall not be purged from you till you "die.

If when Gods Judgments are multiplied, a Nation will not turn unto the Lord, he hath ſworn, and ſworn again (four times together in one Chapter) that though *Noah*, *Daniel*, and *Job* were there, they ſhould deliver neither Son nor Daughter from deſtruction. Ezek. 14. 12 &c.

Wherefore (in one word to conclude) return now O *Shunamite*! return! ariſe, and bethink your ſelves, Men, Brethren, and Fathers! O ye Wiſe and Honourable among the People, conſult, and conſider! what ſhall we do, that the Blood of Jeſus may ſpeak better things for us, then the Blood of the Righteous Royal Martyr? What ſhall we do to be ſaved from ruine and deſtruction?

You have ſeen in ſome meaſure the folly and the madneſs of the wickedneſs, and the wickedneſs of the folly and madneſs of this way of *Joram*.

Wherefore! let us trifle no more, let us ſin no more, let us fool no more, leſt we fall and periſh under the condemnation of *Joram*, when he ſaid, *This evil is from the Lord, Wherefore ſhould I wait upon the Lord any longer*?

FINIS.

ERRATA.

PAge 5. l. 14. dele *there*, p. 11. l. 11. for *indiſpoſed*, r. *incapable*, p. 12. l. 15. r. *ſignature*, p: 20. l. 18. for *of*, r. *if*.

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